

ON AN EXTENSION OF THE H^k MEAN CURVATURE FLOW OF CLOSED CONVEX HYPERSURFACES

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ABSTRACT. In this paper we prove that the H^k (k is odd and larger than 2) mean curvature flow of a closed convex hypersurface can be extended over the maximal time provided that the total L^p integral of the mean curvature is finite for some p .

1. INTRODUCTION

Let M be a compact n -dimensional hypersurface without boundary, which is smoothly embedded into the $(n+1)$ -dimensional Euclidean space \mathbb{R}^{n+1} by the map

$$(1.1) \quad F_0 : M \longrightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n+1}.$$

The H^k mean curvature flow, an evolution equation of the mean curvature $H(\cdot, t)$, is a smooth family of immersions $F(\cdot, t) : M \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ given by

$$(1.2) \quad \frac{\partial}{\partial t} F(\cdot, t) = -H^k(\cdot, t)\nu(\cdot, t), \quad F(\cdot, 0) = F_0(\cdot),$$

where k is a positive integer and $\nu(\cdot, t)$ denotes the outer unit normal on $M_t := F(M, t)$ at $F(\cdot, t)$.

The short time existence of the H^k mean curvature flow has been established in [3], i.e., there is a maximal time interval $[0, T_{\max})$, $T_{\max} < \infty$, on which the flow exists. In [2], we proved an extension theorem on the H^k mean curvature flow under some curvature condition. In this paper, we give another extension theorem of the H^k mean curvature flow for convex hypersurfaces.

Theorem 1.1. *Suppose that the integers n and k are greater than or equal to 2, k is odd, and $n+1 \geq k$. Suppose that M is a compact n -dimensional hypersurface without boundary, smoothly embedded into \mathbb{R}^{n+1} by a smooth function F_0 . Consider the H^k mean curvature flow on M ,*

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} F(\cdot, t) = -H^k(\cdot, t)\nu(\cdot, t), \quad F(\cdot, 0) = F_0(\cdot).$$

If

- (a) $H(\cdot) > 0$ on M ,
- (b) for some $\alpha \geq n+k+1$,

$$\|H(\cdot, t)\|_{L^\alpha(M \times [0, T_{\max}))} := \left(\int_0^{T_{\max}} \int_{M_t} |H(\cdot, t)|_{g(t)}^\alpha d\mu(t) dt \right)^{\frac{1}{\alpha}} < \infty,$$

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then the flow can be extended over the time T_{\max} . Here $d\mu(t)$ denotes the induced metric on M_t .

2. EVOLUTION EQUATIONS FOR THE H^k MEAN CURVATURE FLOW

Let $g = \{g_{ij}\}$ be the induced metric on M obtained by the pullback of the standard metric $g_{\mathbb{R}^{n+1}}$ of \mathbb{R}^{n+1} . We denote by $A = \{h_{ij}\}$ the second fundamental form and $d\mu = \sqrt{\det(g_{ij})}dx^1 \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^n$ the volume form on M , respectively, where x^1, \dots, x^n are local coordinates. The mean curvature can be expressed as

$$(2.1) \quad H = g^{ij}h_{ij}, \quad g_{ij} \left\langle \frac{\partial F}{\partial x^i}, \frac{\partial F}{\partial x^j} \right\rangle_{g_{\mathbb{R}^{n+1}}} ;$$

meanwhile the second fundamental forms are given by

$$(2.2) \quad h_{ij} = - \left\langle \nu, \frac{\partial^2 F}{\partial x^i \partial x^j} \right\rangle_{g_{\mathbb{R}^{n+1}}} .$$

We write $g(t) = \{g_{ij}(t)\}$, $A(t) = \{h_{ij}(t)\}$, $\nu(t)$, $H(t)$, $d\mu(t)$, ∇_t , and Δ_t the corresponding induced metric, second fundamental form, outer unit normal vector, mean curvature, volume form, induced Levi-Civita connection, and induced Laplacian operator at time t . The position coordinates are not explicitly written in the above symbols if there is no confusion.

The following evolution equations are obvious.

Lemma 2.1. *For the H^k mean curvature flow, we have*

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} H(t) &= kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t H(t) + H^k(t)|A(t)|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2, \\ \frac{\partial}{\partial t}|A(t)|^2 &= kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t|A(t)|^2 - 2kH^{k-1}(t)|\nabla_t A(t)|^2 + 2kH^{k-1}(t)|A(t)|^4 \\ &\quad + 2k(k-1)H^{k-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Here and henceforth, the norm $|\cdot|$ is respect to the induced metric $g(t)$.

Corollary 2.2. *If k is odd and larger than 2, then*

$$(2.3) \quad H(t) \geq \min_M H(0)$$

along the H^k mean curvature flow. In particular, $H(t) > 0$ is preserved by the H^k mean curvature flow.

Proof. By Lemma 2.1, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial}{\partial t} H(t) &= kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t H(t) + H^k(t)|A(t)|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\ &= kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t H(t) \\ &\quad + \left(H^{k-1}(t)|A(t)|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-3}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \right) H(t). \end{aligned}$$

Since $k \geq 2$ and k is odd, it follows that

$$H^{k-1}(t)|A(t)|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-3}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2$$

is nonnegative and then (2.3) follows from the maximum principle. \square

Lemma 2.3. *Suppose k is odd and larger than 2, and $H > 0$. For the H^k mean curvature flow and any positive integer ℓ , we have*

$$\begin{aligned} & \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t \right) \left(\frac{|A(t)|^2}{H^{\ell+1}(t)} \right) \\ &= \frac{k(\ell+1)}{k-1} \left\langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t \left(\frac{|A(t)|^2}{H^{\ell+1}(t)} \right) \right\rangle \\ & \quad - \frac{2k}{H^{\ell+4-k}(t)} \left[\left(H(t)\nabla_t A(t) - \frac{\ell+1}{2} A(t)\nabla_t H(t) \right) \right]^2 + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}(t)} |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\ & \quad + \frac{2k-\ell-1}{H^{\ell+2-k}(t)} |A(t)|^4 - \frac{k(\ell+1)(2k-\ell-1)}{2H^{\ell+4-k}(t)} |A(t)|^2 |\nabla_t H(t)|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Proof. In the following computation, we will always omit time t and write $\partial/\partial t$ as ∂_t . Then

$$\partial_t H = kH^{k-1}\Delta H + H^k|A|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-2}|\nabla H|^2.$$

By Corollary 2.2, $H(t) > 0$ along the H^k mean curvature flow so that $|H(t)|^i = H^i(t)$ for each positive integer i . For any positive integer ℓ , we have

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t |H|^{\ell+1} &= (\ell+1)H^\ell \partial_t H \\ &= (\ell+1)H^\ell (kH^{k-1}\Delta H + H^k|A|^2 + k(k-1)H^{k-2}|\nabla H|^2) \\ &= k(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-1}\Delta H + (\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}|A|^2 \\ & \quad + k(k-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}|\nabla H|^2, \\ \Delta |H|^{\ell+1} &= \Delta H^{\ell+1} = (\ell+1)\nabla(H^\ell \nabla H) \\ &= (\ell+1)(\ell H^{\ell-1}|\nabla H|^2 + H^\ell \Delta H) \\ &= (\ell+1)H^\ell \Delta H + \ell(\ell+1)H^{\ell-1}|\nabla H|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t H^{\ell+1} &= kH^{k-1}\Delta H^{\ell+1} - k\ell(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}|\nabla H|^2 \\ & \quad + (\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}|A|^2 + k(k-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}|\nabla H|^2 \\ (2.4) \quad &= kH^{k-1}\Delta H^{\ell+1} + (\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}|A|^2 \\ & \quad + k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}|\nabla H|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Recall from Lemma 2.1 that

$$\partial_t |A|^2 = kH^{k-1}\Delta|A|^2 - 2kH^{k-1}|\nabla A|^2 + 2kH^{k-1}|A|^4 + 2k(k-1)H^{k-2}|\nabla H|^2.$$

Calculate, using (2.4),

$$\begin{aligned} \partial_t \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) &= \frac{\partial_t |A|^2}{|H|^{\ell+1}} - \frac{|A|^2}{|H|^{2\ell+2}} \partial_t |H|^{\ell+1} \\ &= \frac{kH^{k-1}\Delta|A|^2 - 2kH^{k-1}|\nabla A|^2 + 2kH^{k-1}|A|^4 + 2k(k-1)H^{k-2}|\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \\ & \quad - \frac{|A|^2 [kH^{k-1}\Delta H^{\ell+1} + (\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}|A|^2 + k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}|\nabla H|^2]}{H^{2\ell+2}} \\ &= kH^{k-1} \frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \Delta|A|^2 - \frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 + \frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |A|^4 + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}} |\nabla H|^2 \\ & \quad - \frac{k|A|^2}{H^{2\ell+3-k}} \Delta H^{\ell+1} - \frac{\ell+1}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |A|^4 - \frac{k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} |A|^2 |\nabla H|^2, \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}
\Delta \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) &= \frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \Delta |A|^2 + \Delta \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) |A|^2 + 2 \left\langle \nabla |A|^2, \nabla \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle, \\
\nabla \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) &= \frac{-(\ell+1)H^\ell \nabla H}{H^{2\ell+2}} = \frac{-(\ell+1)\nabla H}{H^{\ell+2}}, \\
\Delta \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) &= \nabla \left(\frac{-(\ell+1)\nabla H}{H^{\ell+2}} \right) \\
&= -(\ell+1) \frac{\Delta H \cdot H^{\ell+2} - \nabla H(\ell+2)H^{\ell+1}\nabla H}{H^{2\ell+4}} \\
&= -(\ell+1) \left[\frac{\Delta H}{H^{\ell+2}} - (\ell+2) \frac{|\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+3}} \right], \\
\Delta H^{\ell+1} &= \nabla [(\ell+1)H^\ell \nabla H] = (\ell+1) [\ell H^{\ell-1} |\nabla H|^2 + H^\ell \Delta H] \\
&= \ell(\ell+1)H^{\ell-1} |\nabla H|^2 + (\ell+1)H^\ell \Delta H.
\end{aligned}$$

Combining with all of them yields

$$\begin{aligned}
&(\partial_t - kH^{k-1}\Delta) \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \\
&= kH^{k-\ell-2}\Delta |A|^2 - \frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 + \frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |A|^4 + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}} |\nabla H|^2 \\
&\quad - \frac{k|A|^2}{H^{2\ell+3-k}} [\ell(\ell+1)H^{\ell-1} |\nabla H|^2 + (\ell+1)H^\ell \Delta H] - \frac{\ell+1}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |A|^4 \\
&\quad - \frac{k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)|A|^2}{H^{\ell-k+4}} |\nabla H|^2 \\
&\quad - kH^{k-1} \left[\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \Delta |A|^2 - (\ell+1) \frac{|A|^2 \Delta H}{H^{\ell+2}} + (\ell+1)(\ell+2) \frac{|A|^2 |\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+3}} \right] \\
&\quad - 2kH^{k-1} \left\langle \nabla |A|^2, \nabla \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle \\
&= -\frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 + \left(\frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} - \frac{\ell+1}{H^{\ell+2-k}} \right) |A|^4 + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}} |\nabla H|^2 \\
&\quad - \frac{k(\ell+1)(k+\ell+1)|A|^2 |\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+4-k}} - 2kH^{k-1} \left\langle \nabla |A|^2, \nabla \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle.
\end{aligned}$$

On the other hand,

$$\begin{aligned}
\left\langle \nabla |A|^2, \nabla \left(\frac{1}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle &= 2\nabla A \cdot A \cdot \frac{-(\ell+1)H^\ell \nabla H}{H^{2\ell+2}} \\
&= \frac{-2(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+3}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H.
\end{aligned}$$

Thus, we conclude that

$$\begin{aligned}
&(\partial_t - kH^{k-1}\Delta) \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \\
&= -\frac{2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 + \frac{2k-\ell-1}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |A|^4 + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}} |\nabla H|^2 \\
&\quad - \frac{k(\ell+1)(k+\ell+1)|A|^2 |\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+4-k}} + \frac{4k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H.
\end{aligned}$$

Consider the function

$$f := \frac{-2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 - \frac{k(\ell+1)(k+\ell+1)|A|^2|\nabla H|^2}{H^{\ell+4-k}} + \frac{4k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H.$$

Since

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{2k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H &= \frac{k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+3-k}} \nabla |A|^2 \cdot \nabla H, \\ \nabla \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) &= \frac{\nabla |A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} - \frac{(\ell+1)|A|^2 \nabla H}{H^{\ell+2}}, \end{aligned}$$

it follows that

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{2k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H &= \frac{k(\ell+1)}{H^{2-k}} \nabla H \left[\nabla \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) + \frac{(\ell+1)|A|^2 \nabla H}{H^{\ell+2}} \right] \\ &= \frac{k(\ell+1)}{k-1} \left\langle \nabla H^{k-1}, \nabla \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle \\ &\quad + \frac{k(\ell+1)^2}{H^{\ell+4-k}} |A|^2 |\nabla H|^2. \end{aligned}$$

Consequently,

$$\begin{aligned} f &= \frac{-2k}{H^{\ell+2-k}} |\nabla A|^2 - \frac{k^2(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} |A|^2 |\nabla H|^2 \\ &\quad + \frac{k(\ell+1)}{k-1} \left\langle \nabla H^{k-1}, \nabla \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle + \frac{2k(\ell+1)}{H^{\ell+4-k}} H \cdot \nabla A \cdot A \cdot \nabla H \\ &= \frac{-2k}{H^{\ell+4-k}} \left[\left(H \nabla A - \frac{\ell+1}{2} A \cdot \nabla H \right)^2 \right] \\ &\quad - \frac{2k(\ell+1)(2k-\ell-1)}{4H^{\ell+4-k}} |A|^2 |\nabla H|^2 + \frac{k(\ell+1)}{k-1} \left\langle \nabla H^{k-1}, \nabla \left(\frac{|A|^2}{H^{\ell+1}} \right) \right\rangle. \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we complete the proof. \square

Corollary 2.4. *Suppose k is odd and larger than 2, and $H > 0$. For the H^k mean curvature flow, we have*

$$\begin{aligned} &\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - k H^{k-1}(t) \Delta_t \right) \left(\frac{|A(t)|^2}{H^{2k}(t)} \right) \\ &= \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \left\langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t \left(\frac{|A(t)|^2}{H^{2k}(t)} \right) \right\rangle + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{k+2}(t)} |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\ &\quad - \frac{2k}{H^{k+3}(t)} [H(t) \cdot \nabla_t A(t) - k A(t) \cdot \nabla_t H(t)]^2. \end{aligned}$$

3. PROOF OF THE MAIN THEOREM

In this section we give a proof of theorem 1.1. For any positive constant C_0 , consider the quantity

$$(3.1) \quad Q(t) := \frac{|A(t)|^2}{H^{2k}(t)} + C_0 H^{\ell+1}(t),$$

where the integer ℓ is determined later. By (2.4) and Corollary 2.4, we have

$$\begin{aligned}
& \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t \right) Q(t) \\
& \leq \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) - C_0 \nabla_t H^{\ell+1}(t) \rangle + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{k+2}(t)} |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\
& \quad + C_0 \left[(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}(t)|A(t)|^2 + k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \right] \\
& = \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) \rangle - \frac{2k^2}{k-1} C_0 (k-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\
& \quad + \frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{k+2}(t)} |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 + C_0 k(k-\ell-1)(\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}(t)|\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \\
& \quad + C_0 (\ell+1)H^{k+\ell}(t) [Q(t) - C_0 H^{\ell+1}(t)] H^{2k}(t) \\
& = \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) \rangle \\
& \quad + |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \left[\frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{k+2}(t)} - C_0 k(\ell+1)(k+\ell+1)H^{k+\ell-2}(t) \right] \\
& \quad + C_0 (\ell+1)H^{3k+\ell}(t)Q(t) - C_0^2 (\ell+1)H^{3k+2\ell+1}(t).
\end{aligned}$$

Now we choose ℓ so that the following constraints

$$\ell + 1 \leq 0, \quad k + \ell + 1 \leq 0, \quad 3k + 2\ell + 1 \geq 0$$

are satisfied; that is

$$(3.2) \quad -\frac{1}{2} - \frac{3}{2}k \leq \ell \leq -1 - k.$$

In particular, we can take

$$(3.3) \quad \ell := -2 - k.$$

By our assumption on k , we have $k \geq 3$ and hence (3.3) implies (3.2). Plugging (3.3) into the above inequality yields

$$\begin{aligned}
& \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t \right) Q(t) \\
(3.4) \quad & \leq \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) \rangle + |\nabla_t H(t)|^2 \left[\frac{2k(k-1)}{H^{k+2}(t)} - C_0 k(k+1) \right] \\
& \quad - C_0 (1+k)H^{2k-2}(t)Q(t) + C_0^2 (1+k)H^{k-3}(t).
\end{aligned}$$

Choosing

$$(3.5) \quad C_0 := \frac{1}{2} \frac{k+1}{k-1} H_{\min}^{k+2},$$

where $H_{\min} := \min_M H = \min_M H(0)$, we arrive at

$$\frac{2k(k-1)}{C_0 k(k+1)} \leq H_{\min}^{k+2} \leq H^{k+2}(0) \leq H^{k+2}(t)$$

according to (2.3). Consequently,

$$\begin{aligned}
\left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - kH^{k-1}(t)\Delta_t \right) Q(t) & \leq \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) \rangle \\
(3.6) \quad & \quad - C_1 H^{2k-2}(t)Q(t) + C_2 H^{k-3}(t),
\end{aligned}$$

for $C_1 := C_0(1 + k)$ and $C_2 := C_0^2(1 + k)$.

Lemma 3.1. *If the solution can not be extended over T_{\max} , then $H(t)$ is unbounded.*

Proof. By the assumption, we know that $|A(t)|$ is unbounded as $t \rightarrow T_{\max}$. We now claim that $H(t)$ is also unbounded. Otherwise, $0 < H_{\min} \leq H(t) \leq C$ for some uniform constant C . If we set

$$C_3 := C_1 H_{\min}^{2k-2}, \quad C_4 := C_2 C^{k-3},$$

then (3.6) implies that

$$(3.7) \quad \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial t} - k H^{k-1}(t) \Delta_t \right) Q(t) \leq \frac{2k^2}{k-1} \langle \nabla_t H^{k-1}(t), \nabla_t Q(t) \rangle - C_3 Q(t) + C_4.$$

By the maximum principle, we have

$$(3.8) \quad Q'(t) \leq -C_3 Q(t) + C_4$$

where

$$Q(t) := \max_M Q(t).$$

Solving (3.8) we find that

$$Q(t) \leq \frac{C_4}{C_3} + \left(Q(0) - \frac{C_4}{C_3} \right) e^{-C_3 t}.$$

Thus $Q(t) \leq C_5$ for some uniform constant C_5 . By the definition (3.1) and the assumption $H(t) \leq C$, we conclude that $|A(t)| \leq C_6$ for some uniform constant C_6 , which is a contradiction. \square

The rest proof is similar to [2, 4]. Using Lemma 3.1 and the argument in [2] or in [4], we get a contradiction and then the solution of the H^k mean curvature flow can be extended over T_{\max} .

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